CALIFORNIA HIGH-SPEED RAIL AUTHORITY
MEETING MINUTES
September 28, 2005
SAN FRANCISCO, CALIFORNIA

The meeting of the California High-Speed Rail Authority was called to order on September 28th at 10:20 p.m. at San Francisco City Hall, Room 250.

Members Present: Fran Florez, Chair
Marc Adelman, Vice Chair
Rod Diridon, Sr.
Robert Giroux
Lynn Schenk

Opening Comments

Chair Florez welcomed the audience to the meeting. Chair Florez commented that there were Board Members enroute and moved to Agenda Item 3 until a quorum was established.

Members Reports

Member Diridon reported on the successful merger between the National High-Speed Ground Transportation Association and the American Public Transit Association (APTA) and the creation of the High-Speed & Intercity Rail Committee of APTA. Member Diridon stated the advantage to the merger for California High-Speed Rail is that once a committee is formed under APTA it is eligible for staff support and advocacy assistance.

Chair Florez stated she has made several presentations to service clubs in the Central Valley and will continue to do so when there are any requests made.

Executive Director's Report

Executive Director Morshed reported on the recent amendment to SB1024. This legislation is a major infrastructure bond bill for over $10 billion, the latest amendment provides $1 billion for the high-speed train. SB1024 states the $1 billion would be divided into five corridors and each corridor would receive $200 million. The funds are designated for environmental work; engineering right-of-way; and in most places, grade separation construction. SB1024 is scheduled to be placed on the ballot in November 2006. Currently, SB1024 provides that if the Measure is approved by voters the $10 billion bond measure (SB1169) for the high-speed train system would be repealed. The Senate is planning to hold a number of hearings throughout the state over the next several months. As soon as the dates are determined, they will be made available to interested parties.

Executive Director Morshed reminded the Members that the next Board Meeting is scheduled for November 1st and 2nd and is very important. Executive Director Morshed encouraged the entire Board and interested parties to attend. The purpose of the meeting is the certification of the environmental document. On November 1st, the

meeting will begin in the afternoon and will be open to public comment regarding the Final EIR/EIS document. After the Board listens to testimony during the public comment session, the staff and members of the Attorney General's Office will develop responses to the comments and present the findings on day two of the Board Meeting. The Board Members will deliberate and vote on the Final EIR/EIS document on November 2, 2005.

Executive Director Morshed reported that an organization has been formed called the Association for California High-Speed Train. This association has retained the firm of Nossaman, Guthner, Knox & Elliott as advocacy. Jolinda Thompson is the Executive Director and advocate for this project. The organization is in the process of developing the materials necessary for their work.

Executive Director Morshed commented that this afternoon there will be two events occurring after the Board Meeting. The first is a signing of a co-operative agreement with the Ministry of Land, Infrastructure and Transport of Japan. This agreement is a memorandum of understanding with the Japanese Government to share information about high-speed rail. The Japanese Government has considerable experience and knowledge that they are generous to share with California High-Speed Rail. This agreement will be similar to the agreement California High-Speed Rail has with Spain. After the signing of the co-operative agreement, there will be a three hour seminar on the Japanese High-Speed Train System. It will include the economic benefit of high-speed rail and information on how the system operates. Both events will take place at the Mark Hopkins Hotel at 2:00 p.m.

High-Speed Rail Ridership Forecast

Maren Atwater from Cambridge Systematics and representing Metropolitan Transit Commission, presented a status report on the development of the High-Speed Rail ridership forecasts. The Authority is working in partnership with MTC in the development of the ridership forecasts.

Questions from the Board followed the presentation.

Member Diridon: For the Peer Review Panel, do you have the members?

Ms. Atwater: Northwestern University, UC Santa Barbara are the two academics that we have. We have private sector participants from URS Corporation and Jean Pierre Arduin from France (who has a lot of information about their system), Federal Railroad Administration, CALTRANS Representatives as well as MTC in the Bay Area, SCAG in Los Angeles, SACOG in Sacramento and SANDAG in San Diego, and then we have Fresno COG represented and local representatives from Los Angeles, Orange County, San Francisco and Santa Clara. So we have a series of local representatives from the major metropolitan areas.

Member Diridon: Can you get me a list of the names of the people?

Ms. Atwater: Yes, we have those in our workplan which I'm happy to share.

Member Diridon: In developing your model, does your model project the ridership for the metropolitan areas and sub areas based on demand or based on the expected frequency of the stops of the train.

Ms. Atwater: Both. Demand is generated by a combination of looking at the level of service with the frequency of the trains, as well as the underlying demographics of the people who may ride it. Did that answer your question?

Member Diridon: It did, but it isn't what I wanted to hear. How can you truly measure demand if you are going to restrict demand based on the frequency of the train stops?

Ms. Atwater: Well we could do sensitivity tests that look at very high frequencies to understand what the demand would look like if there was unlimited service. It would be a very reasonable test to look at what it would do. Most of the alternatives would be designed around frequencies that are achievable or expected, but it seems very reasonable to look at an unconstrained demand.

Member Giroux: Does your workplan include a variable for the demand of ridership. Also, does it contain projected housing stock growth along the corridors?

Ms. Atwater: We will be looking at economic growth that would occur; that would be in addition to the economic growth that the current local agencies are projecting, that would be a result of the high-speed rail stations. We are looking at that primarily in certain locations where we expect that kind of economic growth to occur, so we won't be doing that for the entire system, but in specific areas where we expect the economic growth to be effected by the high-speed rail stations.

Member Diridon: In your projections are you assuming the construction of the BART system to San Jose as is in the Master Plan?

Ms. Atwater: Yes.

Member Diridon: It seems to me that if you are going to get a real indication of ridership potential for the system both overall, as well as, within each one of the metropolitan areas; you would not have that demand constrained by level of service. Find out what the demand is and then create the level of service to satisfy the demand.

Ms. Atwater: I think your suggestion is well taken and we will run some unconstrained demand. Thank you.

Member Diridon: Tell me how your study would have information fed into it from the regional rail study. I would think it would be exactly the opposite.

Ms. Atwater: Primarily, it's the definition of alternative that we may want to test from the regional Rail Plan, but the reverse is true that we will be providing information from our ridership forecasting that will be on the markets and the demand that will be used in the regional Rail Study.

Regional Rail Plan

Doug Kimsey from MTC presented an overview of the effort to develop a Regional Rail Plan. The Authority is working partnership with MTC, Caltrain and BART on the management of the regional rail plan.

Questions from the Board followed the presentation.

Member Giroux: Are you looking at the safety aspects on those freight lines when you conduct your study?

Mr. Kimsey: Yes. Part of the capacity analysis we'll be looking at some of the safety needs of those railroad facilities not only on the rail system itself, but grade separations in and around local communities to look at the interface between roads and arterials and the railroad themselves.

Member Diridon: As you already know, but just to have on the record, grade separations are very expensive. One of the devices for creating the revenue for accomplishing grade separations is through the high-speed rail program, is that being factored into your study?

Mr. Kimsey: Yes, both on the East Bay and on the Peninsula, which as you know, has instituted a very aggressive railroad grade separation program and has been doing it for the last 15 to 20 years.

Member Giroux: Currently passenger rail safety is governed by the Federal Rail Administration. Rail safety for freight in California is governed by the Public Utilities Commission. If we're in fact going to study utilizing some of the freight row in the state I would think that a component of whatever the final product of the study is might have a section on how we are going to have to coordinate between the state and the Federal Government on whatever we do.

Mr. Kimsey: Absolutely, actually we've initiated some discussions through your own staff, with FRA and we intend to talk to PUC as well.

Member Giroux: There is currently a measure AB962 by Speaker Nunez sitting on the Governor's desk and that would enhance rail safety laws in the state. You may want to take a look at that in the event that it's signed.

Member Diridon:

You indicated outside area influences, what are they?

Mr. Kimsey: The one map showed the Bay Area and Central Valley.

Member Diridon: And you had a list of Metropolitan Areas or sub metropolitan areas that you were specifically considering

Mr. Kimsey: Right.

Member Diridon: I think that's a good approach especially as it relates to commuter sheds, but it isn't probably the best reflector of use of the high-speed rail program based on our prior study anyway; which suggested that the majority of the ridership on the system would be between San Francisco and Los Angeles, so if you only look so far as say Stockton/Fresno you're not going to see the heavy use of the system which is from Los Angeles to San Francisco/Bay Area. A lot of that went to the Silicon Valley. Is there an opportunity of expanding your out of area consideration to that larger ridership potential for the high-speed train program?

Mr. Kimsey: Absolutely, we are in contact, and have been working with the Transportation Authority from Monterey County, Santa Cruz Transportation Commission, so they are all involved in this study as well as folks from the North as well.

Member Diridon: How about Los Angeles?

Mr. Kimsey: I think we'll work with your staff and with the Los Angeles folks. Actually, as part of the high-speed rail ridership study we're working very closely with Los Angeles Metropolitan Transportation Authority (LAMTA) and Southern California Association of Governments (SCAG) getting their input on the high-speed rail ridership estimation that we're doing. They're involved through that process and will also be involved through our own high-speed regional rail process as well.

Member Diridon: A good indicator is the amount of volume that the commuter aircraft are carrying now and that's relatively easily identified and it's a rapidly increasing number, by the way, contrary to air use around the world. Another is the use of the highways, though I think that may not be as fruitful of an area as the commuter air, at least as found in Europe. Commuter air conversion to rail was the biggest ridership boost, but the primary concern for the question is if you do look at that ridership because if its made inconvenient by a convolution of our corridor along the way then the ability to compete effectively with the commuter airlines will be reduced.

Mr. Kimsey: Absolutely, and actually a critical part of the high-speed rail route ridership survey is looking at the interaction between air travel and auto travel is probably the two main components or competitor, if you will, for intercity or high-speed rail travel.

Member Diridon: The next question is in regard to your Steering Committee and a Peer Oversight Committee, could you explain them? And, could we have the names of the people involved?

Mr. Kimsey: The Steering Committee is stipulated by Regional Measure 2 (RM2) the membership of the Steering Committee is in the legislation and it includes, as I mentioned, the four agencies, staff (Dan Leavitt and myself), BART staff, Caltrain staff (Howard Goode from Caltrain) and then we have CALTRAN's staff represented. We have a couple of the congestion management agencies that have been participating. Solano County is stipulated in the Legislation as is the Santa Clara Valley Transportation Authority.

Member Diridon: You are talking about the Steering Committee?

Mr. Kimsey: Yes, the Steering Committee. We've tended to be little more inclusive because we thought that the legislation might have been a little too constrictive; so we've tended to branch out. I think, along the lines you were alluding to. We want to bring in the outside agencies as well, because we think their input is critical to the success of the program. So we've got the core group that's stipulated in the RM2 language, but then we've expanded out as well, so it's a fairly large body of individuals. I can get you specific names and organization affiliations.

Member Diridon: Could you do that, please?

Mr. Kimsey: Sure and as far as the Advisory Group is concerned that was something that staff internally came up with. We thought it was important to have an outside peer group that would advise both the Steering Committee and the project management team. And

the Advisory Group is made up of business representation and academics. So we've got two UC Berkeley professors (Professor Deacon and Professor Servero). Business representation is Silicon Valley Leadership Group and the Bay Area Council based here in San Francisco. We have the Planning and Conservation League representation on the Advisory Group; Association of Bay Area Governments, Henry Gardner who is the Executive Director of that organization; and I'm leaving somebody else out whose name escapes me at the moment, but I'll make sure you get that list as well.

Member Diridon: Thank you. Finally this is a little bit obtuse for your study but will relate indirectly and that is the issue that Bob mentioned somewhat indirectly regarding safety. We have a war to fight, eventually. It isn't really a war because I think they are on our side, if they can figure out a way to do it with the Federal Railroad Administration. In regard to the technical criteria to be placed in the bid specifications for the vehicles, the other high-speed rail systems in the world have not planned their technical/the strength of their vehicles to survive collisions. I don't know if there is a way to do that at 200 m.p.h., but rather have planned their systems in great detail with significant expense to avoid a collision. Collision Avoidance is what they call it. Collision avoidance is possible without requiring the buff strengths that the current railroad administration requires which are designed to survive collision instead of avoid them. Collision avoidance is possible if you have exclusive right-of-ways. Collision avoidance is very difficult if you are operating at speeds on shared right-of-ways. In fact, you get in the situation you have with Acela where the train then isn't allowed to maintain its speed because it is always in interference with other transportation devices freight railroad and so on. As you plan your system, are you going to be able to keep in mind the extreme importance of having exclusive right-of-ways for the high-speed rail systems, rather than any shared right-of-ways?

Mr. Kimsey: Absolutely, that is actually one of the technical tasks in Task 5. We would be looking at rolling stock constraints, track signaling and dedicated right-of-ways, so that definitely will be a focus in this study.

Member Diridon: It is really important for us to make sure we don't have shared right-of-ways except at very low speeds. Maybe going in an out of a station and that we don't have operational movements that tend to create potentially dangerous situations.

Mr. Kimsey: Agreed.

Member Diridon: Unnecessarily complicated operational movements will cause us to lose some leverage with the FRA in regards to persuading them to relax their buff strength requirements for us; to allow us to go to the Collision avoidance program with light vehicles instead of having to have these huge heavy vehicles that can't be operated at high-speed anyway as part of our technical requirements.

Mr. Kimsey: Very good point.

Chair: Could you provide your website information for the Board as well as the audience.

Mr. Kimsey: www.bayarearailplan.info.

Chair: Thank you.

Mr. Kimsey: I can make this presentation available on that website if you would like to get copies.

Member Diridon: Doug, could you also put on the website the members of the various committees who we've been talking about. Maybe they are already on there.

Mr. Kimsey: They may already be there. If they're not, yes.

Bay Area to Central Valley EIR/EIS

Deputy Director Dan Leavitt presented an overview of the work program and schedule for the Bay Area to Central Valley program EIR/EIS document.

Public Comment

Jack Ringham

Mr. Ringham expressed concern in the difficulty of developing a forecast of ridership for a system that does not currently exist. Mr. Ringham suggested that the most optimistic and pessimistic forecasts that are developed in the study should be included in the results for a wider range to compare outcomes. Mr. Ringham expressed the need to not base conclusions on political considerations, but logic and objectivity.

Richard Mlynarik

Mr. Mlynarik commented on the great opportunity California has because of the Regional Rail Plan and the Bay Area to Central Valley EIR/EIS studies. Mr. Mlynarik expressed the need for good engineering analysis that are not overruled by politics.

Victor D. Kiernan, North America High-Speed Rail Standards Association
Mr. Kiernan gave an unfinished draft which contains steps towards standardization. Mr. Kiernan is proposing a standardization of specification (equipment, maintenance, and operational) in California for High-Speed Rail.

Margaret Okuzumi, Executive Director BayRail Alliance
Ms. Okuzumi expressed the enthusiasm received from the public regarding High-Speed Rail, but was concerned that if the Altamount Pass route is not given thorough consideration the enthusiasm to support the project will decline.

Approval of Meeting Minutes for the following Authority Meetings:
Chair Florez presented the minutes from the September 28, 2005 meeting for approval. Member Diridon moved to approve the minutes, Member Adelman seconded, which carried 5-0.

Authority Members' Meetings for Compensation
Chair Florez presented the list of meetings for compensation for approval. Member Diridon moved to approve the list of meetings for compensation, Member Schenk seconded, which carried 5-0.

Japanese Co-Operative Agreement
Executive Director Mehdi Morshed presented the proposed Co-Operative Agreement with the Ministry of Land, Infrastructure and Transport of Japan. Member Schenk moved to approve the agreement, Member Adelman seconded, which carried 5-0.

Meeting adjourned at 11:45 pm.